

Hon. Judge Thacher.

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THE LIBERAL CHRISTIAN.

"GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND ON EARTH PEACE,
GOOD WILL TOWARDS MEN."—LUKE II. 14.

VOL. I.]

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[No. 1.]

THE following pages are offered to the public, as the first number of a work designed to be published once a fortnight. The name and motto we have chosen may intimate the purpose of our undertaking, and express the temper with which we wish to conduct it.—Our age is distinguished above every other for a spirit of free religious inquiry. Let this spirit be encouraged—let it have free course, and God will be glorified, the world enlightened and made better. Infidelity and irreligion may be traced to the corruptions of Christianity more than to one other source. Our religion has been so altered and disfigured by human additions, that for a time scarcely one vestige of the original was to be discerned. It has been restored in part, but not entirely. Whoever has any knowledge of the history of Christianity from the third to the sixteenth century; and will consider how slowly the public mind becomes enlightened and parts with long established notions however gross, especially upon religion; will not be confident, we should think, in the assertion that there are still no remains of ancient error. The Reformation was indeed a glorious event. It did much for the cause of truth. It roused men from their lethargy, broke the chain which had held the world in mental bondage for more than a thousand years, and gave an irresistible impulse to free inquiry. But the work of reform was then only commenced. Can any one rationally suppose that Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius and Socinus at one effort, great as that effort was, corrected all the errors, rectified all the abuses that had been so long accumulating, and restored Christianity at once to its original simplicity and purity? Such a supposition would be extravagant. Much yet remains to be done, before the world will possess "the truth as it is in Jesus," unadulterated by any human mixtures. "Let no one imagine that our age is arrived at a full understanding of every thing, which can be known by the scriptures. Every age, says the revered Watts,* since the Reformation hath thrown

*In his work on the improvement of the Mind.

some further light on difficult texts and paragraphs of the Bible, which have been long obscured by the early rise of antichrist; and since there are at present many difficulties and darkneses hanging about certain truths of Christian religion, and since several of these relate to important doctrines, such as the origin of sin, the fall of Adam, the person of Christ, the blessed Trinity, and the decrees of God, &c. which do still embarrass the minds of learned and inquiring readers, and which make work for noisy controversy; it is certain there are several things in the Bible yet unknown, and not sufficiently explained; and it is certain that there is some way to solve these difficulties, and to reconcile these seeming contradictions. And why may not a sincere searcher of truth in the present age, by labour, diligence, study and prayer, with the best use of his reasoning powers, find out the proper solution of those knots and perplexities which have hitherto been unsolved, and which have afforded matter for angry quarrelling? Happy is every man who shall be favored of Heaven, to give a helping hand towards the introduction of the blessed age of light and love." Our highest ambition is to do all we can, little as that may be, in this best cause—to diffuse the light of knowledge, and promote in the world charity and all the graces of true religion. This we should prefer to do, if it were possible, without questioning the wisdom or censuring the temper of any of our fellow christians. But truth will require us to tell of ignorance, error, and misrepresentation.—We take no pleasure in recounting the follies and vices that have disgraced the Christian name; but because we revere Christianity and hallow it above every thing but God whom it teaches us to worship, and Jesus Christ who died to establish it on earth, we desire that the abuses of this heavenly gift should be exposed to view.

There are several periodical works published in different parts of our country, which we heartily recommend to our readers—the Christian Disciple, Unitarian Miscellany, Christian Register, Unitarian Defend-

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ant.* If these works were generally known and read in this vicinity, the present undertaking would be superfluous. But as this is not the case, in any considerable degree, and as we cannot reasonably expect it will be, owing to the distance at which the above mentioned works are published, we have felt strongly urged to the present undertaking. Our object is to assist in diffusing a knowledge of the history, evidences, doctrines, ordinances and spirit of Christianity.

We ardently desire to awaken in this vicinity the spirit of inquiry, and candid investigation. Nothing is so important as religious truth—nothing should be sought for with so much avidity. But many of our fellow christians are afraid of inquiry, lest it should lead them to change their opinions. What is this but a fear of truth? Those persons certainly suspect the soundness of their faith, who dread the effects of investigation. But there is not the least reason why a candid christian should fear to examine. If his opinions be correct, they will receive confirmation; "for truth can be in no danger from knowledge, any more than innocence from justice." If they be not correct he will gladly relinquish them, and rejoice that he has detected his error; for the first wish of a candid man must be to know the truth, whatever and with whomsoever it may be. What then must we think of those who advise "to refuse all attendance on the preaching, and avoid all perusal of the publications of Unitarians?"† Why are Unitarians to be shunned? Who have done more in the cause of christianity than Unitarians—to vindicate its truth and authority, to illustrate the records of its revelation, and to enforce its doctrines and precepts? What class of christians has been and is adorned with more men of sincere piety, energetic benevolence, and extensive learning? Truth must be as dear to Unitarians as to other men; eternal happiness is a matter equally momentous to them; the future consequences of sin, they believe, are dreadful; they are therefore not to be hastily charged with intentional error. And as they appeal to the scriptures, and are allowed to have ability to read them with understanding, it is the duty and interest of other Christians to acquaint themselves with their opinions, refute their arguments or yield to their force.—Unitarians do not pretend to an entire exemp-

tion from error. They are willing still to be learners. But they are ready to shew that their doctrines are taught in the bible as none others are taught. Not only do they express every peculiarity of their faith, in the *very words of scripture*;* but they contend that there are no other words, by which they can express them with so much precision and energy. What other sect can thus express the peculiarities of their faith in the language of the Bible?† If then an invariable and close adherence to the Bible be any recommendation to the confidence and friendship of Christians, surely Unitarians are not without a strong claim. They reject the commands and inventions of men. Jesus Christ is "the author and finisher of their faith"—the Holy Bible is their only Creed.

N. B. It is not a mere profession, that we desire to promote free and candid enquiry.—We therefore offer a part of our pages, not exceeding half, to our orthodox Brethren.—Every communication in defence of the Trinitarian and Calvinistic Doctrines will be readily admitted into the Liberal Christian, if written in a suitable manner and accompanied with the author's name.

REVELATION.

The object of Revelation has ever been to make men acquainted with the character of God, and the principles of his moral government; and thus induce them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and piously. The views, which we as Christians enjoy, have been unfolding, from the time that Abraham was chosen to be the "Father of many nations," until the advent of Christ, in whom "were laid up all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom." We consider the Jewish and Christian dispensations, a course of religious instruction given to men by their heavenly Father. The design of the Jewish dispensation was to abolish idolatry and to teach the Unity of God. Men, left to themselves, were perplexed in their attempts to ascertain the essence of the Deity and the mode of his existence. Although he has not at any time left himself without witness, for his "invisible properties even his eternal power and Godhead, when considered in his works, are clearly manifest ever since the creation of

*The Ch. Dis. and Reg. are published in Boston. Unit. Mis. Baltimore. Unit. Def. Charleston, S. C.

†Doct. Miller of Princeton gives this advice.

*See Eddy's Reasons.

†Where do Trinitarians find their peculiar phrases, Trinity, Triune God, Incarnate God, God-man?

the world;" yet men left to themselves, worshipped many parts of the visible creation, and idols "graven by art and man's device." Moreover, being perplexed to account for the moral and physical evils in the world, they were led to believe that there were a great number of divinities, of limited power, interfering claims, and human passions.

To correct these fundamental errors, the true Jehovah revealed himself to the Hebrew nation, as ONE GOD; commanded them to worship him only; and not to make any graven image, or the likeness of any thing in heaven above, or in the earth beneath. In order to secure obedience to this command, they were taught to consider themselves "the peculiar people of God"; their civil constitution recognized God as its head—was a part of their religion; and their prosperity as a nation was made to depend upon their keeping themselves from Polytheism and Idolatry. During forty years, after their signal deliverance from slavery in Egypt, this nation sojourned in the wilderness, under the manifest protection and guidance of him, who declared himself to be ONE. In the course of this time, they continually witnessed the special interposition of Jehovah in their behalf; they received food from heaven, water from the rock, and were accompanied by the Shechinah in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. While in the wilderness, the Jews were repeatedly punished for worshipping the Gods of the Heathen. And after their establishment in the "promised land," we learn that they repeatedly sinned against the first command of their law, and were chastised by great national calamities. In fact, their history is full of lapses into idolatry, and the consequent punishment. Thus were they made a visible example of the moral government of God; and published to the world this truth—the being, who created and governs the universe, is ONE, and he is not to be worshipped in the likeness of any thing in heaven above or earth beneath.

After Moses, the Jews were favoured with a succession of inspired teachers, who reiterated his commands, and exhibited in the most interesting and strongest light the character of God, so far as it is displayed in the works of creation, and in his dealings with their nation.

But revelation was as yet incomplete.—The Jews were directed to look forward to one who would be anointed and sent to lead

them into *all truth*. At the time appointed by God, foretold by the Jewish Prophets and expected throughout the east, Jesus, the Anointed, the Christ was born. Revelation, the purpose of which had ever been to teach something respecting the character of God, and his designs concerning man, was completed in the mission of our Saviour. He was the Light of the World, the Sun of Righteousness. So full was the commission entrusted to him, that it is said, 'he came to shew us the Father' and so completely invested was he with power, to execute his commission, that he said of himself "I am in the Father and the Father in me"; "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; "I and my Father are one."

Jesus did not attempt to explain the essence of the Deity, and the mode of his existence, for these things are beyond the power of man to comprehend—"God is unsearchable and past finding out." But in the first place, he gave the plainest instructions respecting the divine character; revealed a future state of righteous retribution; and disclosed all it is important we should know concerning the Providence and moral government, under which we live—proving that he had authority to teach by working Miracles. In the second place, he gave in his own life and character, an exhibition of the perfections of God, adapted to the comprehension of the human mind.—

(To be continued.)

Dr. Watts on Christian Candor and Religious Inquiry.*

When we have been accustomed all our lives to a particular set of words and ideas, it is pretty hard to persuade ourselves to make any little change in our ideas or words, even though the greatest advantages might be attained by it towards the defence of the gospel; and though it might remove some of the chief embarrassments which attend any particular article of faith. I wish heartily for myself and my friends greater freedom of soul in the humble pursuit of truth.

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I would not willingly call every man an enemy to Christ who lies under some doubts of his supreme Godhead. My Charity inclines me to believe that some of them both read their Bibles carefully, and pray daily for divine instruction, to lead them into all truth.

*See Dissertations relating to the Christian Doctrine of the Trinity.

NATURE OF CHRIST.

UNITARIANS do not believe that Jesus Christ is God. They do not find this doctrine stated explicitly in a *single passage of scripture*; the design of the Mosaic dispensation, and the whole tenor of the sacred writings seem to them opposed to such a doctrine; and the passages, which are alleged in its support, do not, they think, authorize the inference. In future numbers of this work, we shall give the reasons of our dissent from the faith of Trinitarians, in detail. At present we intend only to offer some general remarks.

1. Our Lord, in numerous instances, asserted his intimate communion with the Deity, and surely no one could do the works which he did, except God were with him. But he uniformly declared his subordination to, and his entire dependence upon the Almighty, whom he called *his Father and our Father, his God and our God*. He worshipped him, prayed to him; and when he spake of his own power, it was always as something *derived* from him, who sanctified and sent him into the world.

2. It does not appear, that Jesus ever took pains to give any distinct account of his nature, whatever that may be. This we think he would in mercy have done, if a particular belief respecting it were to be essential to the salvation of men. In his official capacity only, as Saviour of the world, did he discover any solicitude to be known and received.--- To this object he devoted his whole life; for this purpose he died upon the cross. And surely we are not so much concerned to know what is the precise nature of Christ, as to know what was the object of his mission, what he taught, commanded, promised.--- If we are well assured that he came by divine commission, and taught with divine authority, and has power to save us on the conditions he has offered; if we are well assured of these things, it may be a matter of interesting inquiry what his nature is; but cannot be of vital importance.

3. Our only idea of God is, a power which first created, an energy which ever actuates, a wisdom which always directs, a beneficent providence which continually watches over, and a holy Spirit which pervades the universe. When we contemplate Jehovah in these his attributes, and then read the gospel histories of Jesus of Nazareth; although we are filled with reverence for one so holy, and feel a religious awe of one possessing such divine powers; although these feelings involun-

tarily arise, yet we cannot force our minds to believe that he was the Almighty God; we cannot believe that that great being, who fills, sustains and governs the universe, who made the sun, the moon and the innumerable company of the heavenly host, and has perhaps peopled them with intelligent creatures superior to men; we cannot believe that that Almighty being ever descended, in the form of a man upon this little earth, which compared with the rest of creation is less than a sand upon the sea shore, and was insulted, scourged and crucified by an enraged rabble at Jerusalem; we cannot believe this—can any one believe this? The Almighty scourged and crucified! the thought is madness! If this were directly asserted in Scripture, should we not reject it as a forgery? Do any believe this? Most of those, who believe that Jesus Christ is God, at once deny that Deity suffered, although this is the natural inference from their doctrine. They pretend to know when the Godhead took upon him human nature, and at what time he left Jesus to be man alone. But we find not a word in the New Testament upon this mystery of the “two natures,” and we therefore consider it a supposition unauthorized by Scripture, made in order to avoid the dreadful and obvious inference from the doctrine of the Trinity—an inference at which we shudder.

4. Our Trinitarian Brethren bring forward some passages from the Old Testament in support of the Divinity of Christ. We leave the critical examination of these to some future time. At present we remark. Every one knows that the Scriptures are written in the eastern style, which abounds in figures of the boldest kind. One can scarcely open the Bible any where and read a page, without meeting with expressions, that he perceives at once are not to be taken literally. To ascertain what they do really mean, it is often necessary to inquire how they were understood by those accustomed to such language. Inquiries, which have been made into the manners, customs, habits of thinking, modes of speaking &c. &c. common in ancient times and among eastern nations, have thrown great light upon the sacred pages. All Christians gladly avail themselves of this light, excepting when it discloses their error upon some favorite Doctrine. We think (perhaps we are wrong) this is the case with regard to the doctrine of the Trinity. For we would ask, what were the expectations of the Jewish nation, at the time of our Saviour, and ages

before, expectations founded upon the same Scriptures of the Old Testament? Did they expect the Almighty to appear in a visible human form? No. It is known to all that they looked for a great temporal Prince; one so highly exalted above all others, that had been sent to their favored nation, that he was called by Isaiah, "the Wonderful Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."* They supposed he would be a military leader, establish a kingdom over all the nations of the earth, and reign in Peace and Righteousness. From this we infer that the language, which is now adduced from the Old Testament by Trinitarians, was not then supposed to teach the doctrine of the Trinity. If the error of the Jews had been that they believed the *simple unity of God*, instead of his *Unity in a three fold compound*; and that they had no notion of their Messiah's being one of this Trinity; if this had been their error we think it would have been clearly pointed out to them. But we find that, when (John x. 35) they inferred from our Lord's language, that he meant to intimate his equality with the Father, he immediately repelled the charge of blasphemy by explaining his words. "If he called them Gods, unto whom the word of God came, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, thou blasphemest; because I said I am the son of God?"

Again; as to the language of the New Testament, we ask—In what sense did those friends and disciples of our Lord, who accompanied his ministry and shared his labors, receive those words of their master which are now alleged to prove that he is God? Did they understand him to assert that he and his Father were "one God?" "What indications escaped them of their understanding him in this awful and overpowering sense?—Did they cover their faces and fall prostrate in his presence? Did they afterwards associate with him, oppressed by the consciousness of his divinity—even with that hesitation and restraint which any of them would have felt, if apprised that they were conversing with an earthly king in disguise, however much encouraged by his condescension? We know the contrary of all this; that his disciples to the last conversed with him without embar-

assment, affectionately, familiarly, however respectfully." What then are we to believe—"that the disciples talked familiarly with the Almighty, knowing well with whom, and seated themselves at table with him, so undauntedly, that one of them scrupled not to recline upon his bosom? or that some Christians of a later day have discovered a doctrine, the reception of which they consider essential to salvation, but which was unknown to the confidential disciples of Jesus, to whom, in their retirement, he was accustomed to expound what he had declared ambiguously in public?"

5. There is yet another objection to the doctrine of the Trinity. The supposition that Jesus of Nazareth was God gives to his whole history an appearance of *fiction*. We read that he was "born of a woman," "was subject to earthly parents;" that at his baptism by John, the Spirit of God was seen descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and a voice from heaven was heard, saying, "*this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*" At the transfiguration witnessed by Peter and James and John, the same words were repeated. Jesus in numerous instances called himself the *Son of God*. He often prayed to his *heavenly Father*; declared his entire dependence upon him; that he was sanctified and sent into the world; and that he came to do *God's will not his own*.—"Now we ask, what impression this language was fitted and intended to make? Could any who heard it, have imagined that Jesus was the *very God*, to whom he was so industriously declared to be inferior, the *very being*, by whom he was sent and from whom he professed to have received his message and power? Let it here be remembered, that the human birth, and bodily form, and humble circumstances, and mortal sufferings of Jesus, must all have prepared men to interpret, in the most unqualified manner, the language in which his inferiority to God was declared.—Why then was this language used so continually and without limitation, if Jesus were the Supreme Deity, and if this truth were an essential part of his religion?" Furthermore we read that Jesus was tempted, "but GOD cannot be tempted." But above all, Christ's agony in the garden, his crucifixion and death are wholly inexplicable on the supposition that he was the *very Father* to whom he prayed, the *very God* to whom he cried, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." Unitarians believe "that Christ's humiliation was real and entire, that

* God was a term (as our Lord intimates, John x. 35.) applied to Moses, the Prophets and the chief men. See Exodus vi. 1.—xxii. 28.—More upon this here after.

the whole Saviour and not a part of him, suffered, that his crucifixion was a scene of deep and unmixed agony. As we stand round his cross, our minds are not distracted, or our sensibilities weakened, by contemplating him as composed of incongruous and infinitely differing minds, and having a balance of infinite felicity. We recognize in the dying Jesus, but one mind. This, we think, renders his sufferings, and his patience and love in bearing them, incomparably more impressive and affecting, than the system we oppose." If we believed the doctrine of the Trinity, we should be perplexed and embarrassed on every page of the New Testament. For the whole seems to be written on the supposition that Jesus Christ was really what he professed to be—the son of God, i. e. a person sanctified and sent into the world to teach men the way to eternal life.

6. We are fully persuaded that the doctrine we oppose was not known to the Apostles, but originated in the second or third century of the Christian era—one or two hundred years after Christ had ascended to his father our father, his God and our God.

MORE FROM WATTS.

Surely those who have well known the Arian and Socinian controversies, and have given themselves leave to be acquainted with the force of argument on all sides, must acknowledge that it would be an invaluable happiness to the christian world, if any hypothesis of explaining the Trinity were current among us, which might have clear and distinct ideas affixed to it, that we might not be perpetually running to this refuge, "*It is all mysterious and inconceivable, and therefore we must not search into it.*" I should be very glad if a man might be permitted to imitate the blessed work of angels, (1 Pet. i. 12.) and might desire to look into the glorious things of Christ, without being suspected of a profane curiosity or a violation of faith.

"UNITARIAN BELIEF."

We believe that the New Testament contains a faithful record of the all important Revelation which God made to mankind by Jesus Christ.—We believe in the divinity of our Lord's doctrines and mission. We believe him to be the Christ, the son of the Living God.

We believe that JEHOVAH, the GOD AND FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the

ONLY TRUE GOD, because our Saviour expressly declared it. We believe that He is the ONLY PROPER OBJECT OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, because our Saviour expressly declared this also, and, by precept and by example, taught his disciples to pray to the FATHER, and to HIM ALONE. We believe that the FATHER is the original Source of every blessing, and that HIS FREE UNMERITED GRACE is the SOLE ORIGINAL SPRING of the Salvation which is by Christ, because such is the express and uniform language of the New Testament.—*John xvii. 3. Matt. iv. 10. vi. 9. xxvi. 39. John iv. 23, 24. xvi. 23. Eph. i. 3. Tit. iii. 4—7. See also Deut. iv. 35.—vi. 4. xxxii. 39. Is. xlv. 5, 21, 22. lli. 13.—Mark xii. 29—32. Rom. xvi. 27. 1 Cor. viii. 4—6. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Phil. iv. 6, 7. Exod. xxxiv. 14.*

These fundamental principles appear to us distinctly, plainly, and expressly taught in various parts of the Scriptures: and we see no proof whatever, that they teach any thing inconsistent with them. It is indeed impossible that revealed truth can be inconsistent, with itself; and we hold that *whatever* (through the imperfection of human language,) *is obscure or of doubtful meaning, ought, in reason and common sense, to be interpreted by the clear and express declarations of the Scriptures in other parts.*

In the foregoing principles all Unitarians agree; on other points we differ as to the teachings of the Scriptures. Some, for instance, hold that our Saviour existed before his human birth in a state of great glory and happiness; others, that he was, as to nature, 'in all respects like his brethren.' And among the latter, some believe that he was the 'son of Joseph;' others believe in his miraculous conception. But as he ascribes all his powers and refers all his authority to the Father who sent him,—as he expressly says, 'My Father is greater than I,' and declares that he did not himself know the time when his prophecy respecting Jerusalem, would be fulfilled,—we all believe in his subordination to the Father and dependence upon Him; we all believe in the Absolute Unity, and Unrivalled Supremacy of Jehovah, the Almighty, All-wise, and All-gracious Creator and Preserver of all things, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;—and therefore, following what we think *the absolute commands of God himself*, we strictly confine our worship to GOD even the FATHER.—See *Matt. xi. 23. xxviii. 13. Mark xiii.*

32. *John* v. 26, 27, 30. vii. 16. xii. 49. xiv. 10, 23. *Eph.* i. 19, 22.

Nevertheless we cordially receive whatever the *Scriptures* teach respecting the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe in his divine authority; that his words are the words of the Father who sent him: that for his obedience unto death, God exalted him to be Lord over the dead and the living, and to be our final Judge; and that he is therefore entitled to our reverence, faith, and submissive obedience. We believe that he gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity: that by his submitting unto death, even the death of the cross, he conveyed and assured to us the blessings of the new covenant, pardon and everlasting life: that we have redemption *through* his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; and that he is therefore entitled to our warmest gratitude and love. We believe that he set us a perfect example of piety towards God and love to man, of humility, patience, self-denial, and all other virtues; and that he is therefore entitled to our admiring veneration.

We do not believe the Holy Spirit, or Spirit of God, to be a distinct being from God himself. We regard the expression as denoting, in the *Scriptures*, either God himself, or, most commonly, the influence or agency of God in whatever way employed, and particularly his miraculous agency.

The Gospel appears to us to promise its blessings of forgiveness and eternal salvation, only to those who comply with its terms,—‘repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,’ such faith as produces religious obedience, the regulation of the heart and life by Christian principles and precepts. Nevertheless we believe that ‘in every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.’—We reject, as utterly unscriptural, the doctrine of Satisfaction, and every other which represents the death of Christ as rendering God merciful, or as enabling Him to extend his mercy to the sinner—but we feel the sinner’s hope to be abundantly strong and consoling, while resting on the covenant of grace, made by the God of love and mercy with his guilty creatures, through his beloved Son and servant Jesus Christ, sealed by the blood of our Saviour, and attested by the mighty power of his God and Father. *We depend on the grace of God in Christ.*

As to the precise nature and duration of the future punishment of the wicked, there is among Unitarians, as among other sects of

Christians, much diversity of opinion: but that they will be great and dreadful we all agree. We receive with profound reverence, the awful declarations of Revelation respecting it. We believe that ‘we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ;’ that ‘he who soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption;’ and that ‘indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish’ will be awarded ‘to every one who doeth evil,’ in the day when God ‘shall judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained.’

Such are the religious opinions which are so much and so unjustly ‘spoken against.’—Unitarians have no *Creed*, no rule of faith or practice, except the *Scriptures*—they maintain the right, and feel the duty, of private judgment; and therefore there must be among them differences in opinion, and in modes of expression. But the foregoing may be depended upon as a correct representation of the sentiments of Unitarians in general.

‘*Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, and mother.*’—‘*He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is who loveth me.*’ Such are the words of the Lord Jesus.

‘IF ANY MAN TRUST TO HIMSELF THAT HE IS CHRIST’S, LET HIM OF HIMSELF THINK THIS AGAIN, THAT AS HE IS CHRIST’S, EVEN SO ARE WE CHRIST’S.’

“The Bible only is the religion of Protestants. I am fully assured that God does not, and therefore man ought not, to require any more of any man than this; to believe the *Scripture* to be God’s word, to endeavor to find the true sense of it, and to live according to it.”

Chillingworth.

“The only means by which knowledge can be advanced, is freedom of inquiry. An opinion is not therefore false, because it contradicts received notions; but whether true or false, let it be submitted to a fair examination; truth must in the end be a gainer by it and appear with greater evidence.”

Bp. Lowth.

“There are three things,” said Martin Luther, “to be done by a minister of the Gospel,” and the same may be said of every Christian. “First, to read the bible over and over. Secondly, to pray constantly and earnestly. And thirdly, to be always a learner.”

CANDOR AND UNANIMITY.

"WERE this an age wherein any thing might be wondered at, it would be matter of deserved admiration, that we are still so far from being cemented together in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace. Must the fire of our uncharitable animosities be like that of the temple, which was never to be extinguished? However, I am sure it is such an one as was never kindled from heaven, nor blown up with any breathings of the holy and divine Spirit.

May we be happily delivered from the plague of our divisions and animosities! Than which there hath been no greater scandal to the Jews, nor opprobrium of our religion among Heathens and Mahometans, nor more common objection among the papists, nor any thing which hath been more made a pretence even for ATHEISM and INFIDELITY. For our controversies about religion have brought at last, even religion itself into a controversy among such whose weaker judgments have not been able to discern where the plain and unquestionable way to heaven hath lain, in so great a mist as our disputes have raised among us. Weaker heads, when they once see the battlements shake, are apt to suspect that the foundation itself is not firm enough; and to conclude, if any thing be called in question, that there is nothing certain.

Religion hath been so much rarefied into airy notions and speculations, by the distempered heat of men's spirits, that its inward strength and the vitals of it, have been much abated and consumed by it. Men, being very loath to put themselves to the trouble of a holy life, are ready to embrace any thing which may but dispense with that; and, if but listing themselves under such a party, may but shelter them, under a disguise of religion, none are more ready than such to be known by distinguishing names; none more zealous in the defence of every tittle and punctilio that lies most remote from those essential duties, wherein the kingdom of God consists, righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It will require both time and skill to purge out these noxious humors. I know of no prescription so likely to effect this happy end, as an infusion of the true spirit of religion;—thereby to take men off from their eager pursuit after ways and parties, notions and opinions, and to bring them back to a right understanding of the nature, designs, and principles of CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is a religion which it is next to a miracle men should ever quarrel or fall out about, much less that it should be the occasion, or at least the pretence, of all that strife and bitterness of spirit, of all those contentions and animosities which are, at this day, in the christian world. But our only comfort is, that whatever our spirits are, our God is the God of peace, our Saviour is the Prince of peace; and that wisdom which this religion teacheth, is both pure and peaceable. Christians should be known by the benignity and sweetness of their disposition, by the candor and ingenuity of their spirit, by their mutual love, forbearance and condescension towards one another. But this is not the practice of christianity. If pride and uncharitableness, if divisions and strifes, if wrath and envy, if animosities and contentions were but the marks of true christians, Diogenes never need light his lamp at noon to find out such among us. But, if a spirit of meekness gentleness, and condescension; if a stooping to the weakness and infirmities of others;—if a pursuit after peace, even when it flies from us, be the indispensable duties and characteristic notes of those who have more than the name of christians, it may possibly prove a difficult inquest to find out such, for the crowds of those who shelter themselves under that glorious name.

The very commands of our SAVIOUR shewed his meekness; his laws were sweet and gentle laws, not like Draco's that were writ in blood, unless it were his own blood that gave them." EDWARD STILLINGFLEET, D. D.

"There will be two wonders in heaven," says Tillotson, "first, why many are absent whom we expected to find there; and second, why many are there, whom we had no hope of meeting."

NOTICE.

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